

House Finance Committee Public Testimony  
Thursday, January 25, 2018 9:00AM

Chairs Foster and Seaton, members of the committee, for the record my name is David Piazza, Superintendent of the Southwest Region School District.

As many of you have heard previously, school districts need notice of funding levels as early as possible to help planning efforts for the upcoming school year. Although Southwest Region did not send out pink slips to employees last year, the District did hesitate on making hiring decisions early. This made for a long and drawn out hiring season. Where the District normally has all of its positions filled by June 1<sup>st</sup>, the District had several vacancies including two Principal/Teacher positions into the summer months. While the pool of candidates still contain quality individuals, the number of candidates are very limited, especially the ones that have made up their mind to seek their calling in Alaska.

The District supports measures by the legislature to secure funding early to help public school systems including the department of education as well as local schools to plan effectively and efficiently. The District supports HB 287.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

**From:** Todd Hindman [<mailto:THindman@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 25, 2018 8:38 AM  
**To:** Rep. Paul Seaton <[Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** HB 287

I wanted to voice my support for HB 287. The reality in Alaska today is that we are not able to hire and retain qualified educators for a variety of reasons including but not limited to salaries in the lower 48 being competitive to the salaries in Alaska, the challenges of teaching in Alaska (especially in rural areas), and our defined contribution retirement system. This has been exacerbated in the past few years due to the delays in funding of the public education system. When districts have to wait late in the hiring system, the best teachers have been hired in the lower 48, greatly reducing the quality of the pool of possible applicants. While, this is only part of the problem, HB 287 is a step in the right direction to address the ability to hire and retain the best educators for our students.

Todd Hindman  
Principal, Fireweed Academy

*The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not 'Eureka!' (I've found it!), but 'That's funny...' -Isaac Asimov.*

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